

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STATE

MAGAZINE



AFGHANISTAN'S BLUE HAVEN

MARCH 2008 >>>

11

Key Ingredients

FSNs play key roles in virtual presence posts.

26

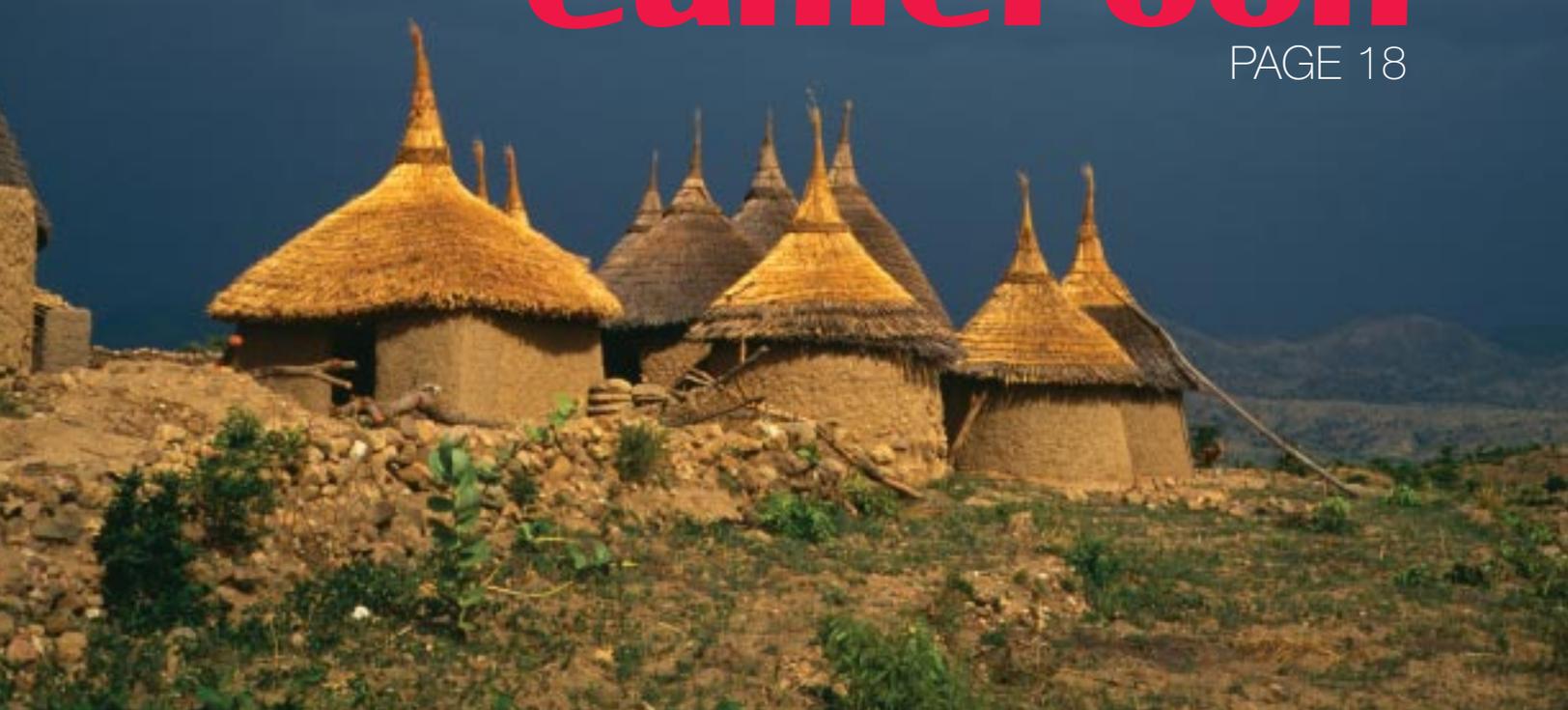
One Big Idea

Embassy Stockholm promotes energy alternatives.

POST OF THE MONTH

Cameroon

PAGE 18



FEATURES

- 08** Morning Danish
Ambassador's bike tour 'pedals' public diplomacy.
- 14** Cultured Communication
Mission seminar details Malawian way of life.
- 16** Blue Vistas
Embassy helps protect Afghanistan's mountain lakes.
- 24** Total Recall
Online system holds employee data, provides reports.
- 28** Office of the Month: EPPD
On economics, this office has the answers.
- 32** Patch Work
Quilter's art warms Walter Reed patients.

32



ON THE COVER

Afghanistan's Band-i-Amir lakes made *Time* magazine's 2006 list of the world's "Best Natural Wonders."
Photograph by Alex Dehgan

COLUMNS

- 2** From the DG
- 3** Readers' Feedback
- 4** In the News
- 34** Safety Scene
- 36** State of the Arts
- 37** Appointments
- 38** Obituaries
- 39** Retirements
- 40** The Last Word

08



The Family Liaison Office—Here to Serve You

On Wednesday, March 5, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Family Liaison Office. Since 1978, FLO has been dedicated to improving the quality of life of our Foreign Service employees and their families, a mission I take very seriously, particularly as the number of employees serving on unaccompanied tours continues to grow. As we call on our men and women to take on more challenging assignments, we want to do all that we can to assist them and their families.

Although the Department is a relatively small organization, we have taken a number of steps to better support employees and families separated by unaccompanied tours. For instance, in 2005, FLO established a dedicated position for a specialist, Nan Leininger, to answer questions, clarify options and offer information and guidance to employees who are serving on unaccompanied tours and their families. Those of you who are considering an unaccompanied tour and want information and guidance can contact Nan at FLOaskUT@state.gov.

I am especially pleased that, with funding provided by the Cox Foundation, FLO contracted with MHN—formerly the Managed Health Network—in July 2006 to provide around-the-clock Web- and telephone-based support services. Then, with additional Cox support, FLO recently expanded its contract with MHN to provide counseling sessions for family members of employees serving at any of the unaccompanied posts. MHN offers up to three sessions per family member per issue, wherever they live. I am excited about what they are trying to do to assist our people, and I encourage you to take advantage of this valuable resource.

To provide additional support to the children of employees at unaccompanied posts, FLO developed handbooks to help children understand and cope with the stress and uncertainty of having a parent serving on an unaccompanied tour. Individual, age-appropriate handbooks were designed for several different age ranges, but all of the

handbooks include a large selection of meaningful activities and exercises that will help children better understand and deal with the separation. For example, the handbook for preschool children has coloring



activities and number games to help younger children understand what is happening to them, while the handbook for teenagers has exercises that help teens explore the complex emotions associated with a separation. All of the handbooks

unaccompanied posts. Employees serving at an unaccompanied post can send the information on their children so that we can arrange for them to receive a medal and certificate of appreciation for their sacrifice. At the Foreign Service Youth Foundation Award Ceremony held July 8, 2007, Deputy Secretary Negroponte made a special presentation of these medals and certificates, and more than 20 of the young people who had received these medals were present. His own children were among those honored, as they had endured the separation from their father while he served in Iraq.

Unaccompanied tours can have an impact on the education of our children. For those going to Iraq, families may need to decide whether to stay at post or move to another location. Our Education and Youth staff can work closely with these families to make sure that they understand all of the potential ramifications, particularly for high school students.

I am excited about the things we are trying to do to help our people. The options that family members have today are far different, and far more extensive, than they were when I joined the Foreign Service in 1984.

In today's world, with nearly 60 percent of our embassies classified as hardship

“The options that family members have today are far different, and far more extensive, than they were when I joined the Foreign Service in 1984.”

are engaging and encourage family communication and the development of coping skills.

FLO also developed recognition awards for the children of those serving at

posts, we must pay close attention to family issues. Without proper family support, we will not be able to meet our mission.

We welcome your suggestions via unclassified e-mail at “DG Direct.” ■

IMPACT's Impact

The story "Accommodating Effort—the Department levels playing field for employees with disabilities" (*State Magazine*, December 2007) was informative and appropriately coincided with National Disability Employment Awareness month. It was disappointing, however, that there was no reference to the IRM Program for Accessible Computer/Communication Technology. IMPACT is the Department's resource for achieving electronic and information technology accessibility for all employees and U.S. citizens and has a decade of service providing assistance to post and bureau implementation of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. We address Section 508 policy and technology service requests and conduct technical analyses of Department Web sites and applications.

Henrietta H. Fore, when Under Secretary for Management, spoke during the 10th anniversary celebration of the founding of IMPACT about its positive contributions and the commemoration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. You can learn more about IMPACT services at <http://impact.state.gov> or by contacting section508@state.gov.

Charmaine M. Iversen

IMPACT Founder/Manager

Department of State Section 508 Coordinator

Polish Independence Date

In the November 2007 Post of the Month article on the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, I noticed that you cited November 11, 1918, as Poland's independence day. That is the date Polish independence was restored. People unfamiliar with Polish history may think Poland was not an independent state until 1918, but Poland was an independent and powerful European nation from 966 until 1795, when a partition imposed by other nations extinguished Polish independence. Although the Poles fought valiantly for more than a century to regain their independence, the dream was not realized until after World War I.

Clifford Brzozowski

Liaison Officer

Bureau of Information Resource Management

BNET History

While enjoying your informative and interesting article about BNET in the November 2007 issue ("Focus on BNET"), as the creator of BNET I can attest to a few errors of fact. First, the station launched in December 1990, not 1993. Robert Hawkins, the former A/EX budget officer, coined the original name in a brainstorming session a month before the launch date. We had wanted to call it BBNET, since from the outset the station was simultaneously a television broadcast and bulletin board. But BBNET was a widely used term in the computer world, so we shortened the name to BNET, which could imply either a broadcast or bulletin network.

Far from being a recent phenomenon, Department events such as town meetings were shown on BNET from the beginning, as were live feeds from CNN, BBC and other news channels. The first expansion of BNET occurred in 1992 when the signal was sent to Department annexes from Main

State. Before OpenNet, we found there was insufficient network bandwidth to push the signal to the desktop or expand overseas.

Early BNET was the subject of a cover story in *State Magazine* (January 1991). I am pleased that BNET has grown and remained a fixture of Department communications.

Robert Stephens

Senior Media Advisor

National Cancer Institute

The Author Responds:

I can only see one real error in my article, that BNET started in 1990 rather than 1993. Though it may be imprecise, I don't think my statement about the background derivation of the term "BNET" is enough off the mark to say it's an error.

David Hopwood

Media Specialist

BNET

LET US HEAR FROM YOU



E-mail
statemagazine@state.gov



Fax
(202) 663-1769



Phone
(202) 663-1700



Mailing Address
2401 E Street, NW
HR/ER/SMG, SA-1, Room H-236
Washington, DC 20522-0108

Letters should not exceed 250 words and should include the writer's name, address and daytime phone number. All letters become the property of *State Magazine*. Letters will be edited for length, accuracy and clarity. Only signed letters will be considered.

NEWS

Milton Green gives some fatherly support to Zachary.



Those Who Are Left Behind

Funding Sought for Children of Terrorism Victims

The State Department has launched a campaign to raise money to fund scholarships for eight Department dependents who lost parents in overseas terrorist acts between 1998 and 2002.

The scholarships are provided by the Fallen Diplomats Fund of the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund, which enables federal employees to help needy federal employees with emergency assistance and scholarships. As the first children to be served by the Fallen Diplomats Fund prepare to leave for college, the students' scholarships have not been fully funded.

One of the fund's intended recipients, high school junior Zachary Green, was 11 when his mother and sister were killed in a 2002 church bombing in Islamabad, Pakistan.

"I didn't know what terrorism was at the time," he said.

Media inquiries poured in after the attack, and Zachary's father, Milton Green, took a posting to Thailand to protect his son from the onslaught. Milton Green is now chief of the Policy, Lifecycle and Reporting Division in the Bureau of Information Resource Management.

Now 16, Zachary plays the drums and hopes to become a music producer or sound engineer. He said he is determined to get the college education his mother wanted him to have.

"If I sat every day and mourned about my mom and sister, I probably would have been a high school dropout or a person in the streets," he said. "I can't do that, because I know that I wouldn't be doing that if they were here."

FEEA promises a dollar-for-dollar match of all funds raised by the State Department or Department employees, up to the estimated \$750,000 needed to guarantee full scholarships to the eight students. It also hopes to provide full tuition, room, board and books to any dependent child who loses a parent to overseas terrorism in the future. FEEA successfully provided a four-year scholarship for every child who lost a parent in the Oklahoma City bombings and the 9/11 attacks on the Pentagon.

Donations can be made online through the FEEA Web site at www.feea.org/special_funds/diplomatic.html or by writing a check to the Fallen Diplomats Fund, FEEA Headquarters, 8441 West Bowles Avenue, Suite 200, Littleton, Colo. 80123.

American Presence Post Launched in Korea

At the October opening of an American Presence Post in Busan, Korea's second-largest city, 60 leaders from government, business, education and the media gathered to welcome the opening of the first U.S. diplomatic presence in Busan since the closing of the U.S. consulate in 1999 because of budget constraints.

More than 50 State Department employees created the APP in a little over a year, making it the first APP opened anywhere under Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's transformational diplomacy



initiative. Korea's leading port, Busan has a population of 3.6 million and is also home to consulates of China, Japan and Russia.

The APP supports public diplomacy by daily engaging with the local community. Whether speaking at a university, meeting with city hall officials or working with Korean staff from the United Nations Memorial Cemetery, APP officers provide American representation at events that are not always easily accessible to colleagues in Seoul.

The APP has one full-time diplomat and two Korean staff members who provide information about doing business with the United States and about U.S. institutions. The APP's first acting officer, Robert Ogburn, met many Busan residents and officials, all of whom wished to learn more about America.

"We hope that Busanites think of this as a small corner of America here in the great city of Busan," Ogburn said.

An American Corner also gives citizens access to information about the United States, allowing business people to locate prospective clients and suppliers, and allowing students to learn about opportunities for study in the United States.

Cutting the ribbon opening the APP are, from left, Busan Police Agency Commissioner Lee Myung-gyu, Busan Metropolitan Council Chairman Cho Gil-woo, Busan Mayor Hur Nam-sik, Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, Public Affairs Officer Patrick J. Linehan and Busan Education Board Director Seol Dong-keun.

REMEMBER BEIRUT

The Office of Casualty Assistance and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs are coordinating a commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Embassy bombing in Beirut. The event will take place on Friday, April 18, time and exact location at the State Department to be determined. Please contact the Office of Casualty Assistance at 202-736-4303 or oca@state.gov for more information.

Education Week Aids Embassy Outreach

International Education Week in November transformed the American Cultural Center in Damascus, Syria, into a meeting place for nearly 500 Syrian students and youth, dispelling the myth that the center is off limits to Syrians.

While the U.S.-Syrian bilateral relationship remains tense and Syrians are routinely prevented from attending events at the cultural center, Syrians have a thirst for information about the United States, educational opportunities and English teaching. The Syrian government's control of all information sources makes it difficult for the U.S. Embassy in Damascus to get out its message, but the inaugural open house gave Syrians access to English and Arabic books, publications, journals and magazines distributed by the information resource center. In the auditorium, students gathered around tables piled with information about English classes, student advising, exchanges, scholarships and student visas.

Other events included student advising and visa sessions, an alumni panel on university life in the United States, a movie and discussion on environmentalism, a program on nursing education with returned International Visitor program grantees and an English teachers workshop led by the embassy's two English Language Fellows. In addition, a doctor from the Syrian-American Medical Association joined an advising session for medical students, and the head of a Syrian environmental organization led the discussion on environmental protection.

Using existing facilities and a budget of less than \$500, the embassy sent a message of welcome to Syrians.



EducationUSA adviser Hania Zahabi, right, speaks with students about advising and testing services offered at the American Cultural Center.



Those who worked on the project include, from left, Chris Vogt, Mark Lanning and Mark Wuebbels.

Consulate General Records U.S.-South China Relationship

Guangzhou—the steamy, sprawling South Chinese city of more than 8 million—may bring to mind thoughts of skyscrapers and Cantonese food, but the Foreign Service officers who work there see life with a slightly broader perspective due to the work of three first-tour officers at the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou: Chris Vogt, Mark Lanning and Mark Wuebbels.

Inspired by a similar project done by the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai, the trio contacted and interviewed historians, academics and State Department veterans involved in events marking the United States' two centuries-plus presence in South China.

The project's record begins with the

establishment of diplomatic relations in Guangzhou in 1784 and fast-forwards through the 19th and early 20th centuries, when Guangzhou was a trade center and a meeting area for 1911's revolutionaries, who overthrew the Ching dynasty.

It also notes the end of America's presence in China in the late 1940s and the return of U.S. diplomats in 1980. Comments from the first consul general of the post-normalization era, Richard Williams, and current Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher provide insights into a 1980s China in transition.

In an interview for the history, Boucher noted the consulate's humble beginnings on

an upper floor of an aging hotel—and the old black telex machine that sat on a board on top of a bathtub.

The staff “had to cut paper tape and then run it through [the telex] to send [unclassified] messages to Beijing,” he said.

Reflecting how much has changed, Consulate General Guangzhou now has 55 American officers and 190 Locally Employed staff. The consular section alone has more than 100 LE staff and handles one of the highest-volume visa workloads in the world, including immigrant visa and adoption applications for all of China.

The history project is available for viewing on the consulate general's Web site, www.guangzhou.usembassy-china.org.cn.

Foreign Affairs Day 2008, the annual homecoming for State Department retirees, will take place May 2 and feature morning discussions in the Dean Acheson Auditorium and nearby conference rooms. The discussions will be followed by an elegant luncheon for 250 attendees in the Benjamin Franklin Room. The luncheon costs \$40 and is available on a first-come-first-served basis, based on when payment is received.

The invitations were to be mailed in late February. To receive one, send an e-mail to foreignaffairsday@state.gov. The e-mail should state the retiree's first and last names, retirement date, whether he/she was Civil Service or Foreign Service and their mailing and e-mail addresses.

At the 2007 ceremony, the keynote address was delivered by Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte. Off-the-record seminars from the regional bureaus covered topical foreign policy issues and a panel discussion, “Maritime Security in our Ports: The Facts,” addressed how the public and private sectors can jointly improve port security.

A tradition at Foreign Affairs Day is the American Foreign Service Association's memorial plaque ceremony. The ceremony honors Department employees who were killed in the line of duty.

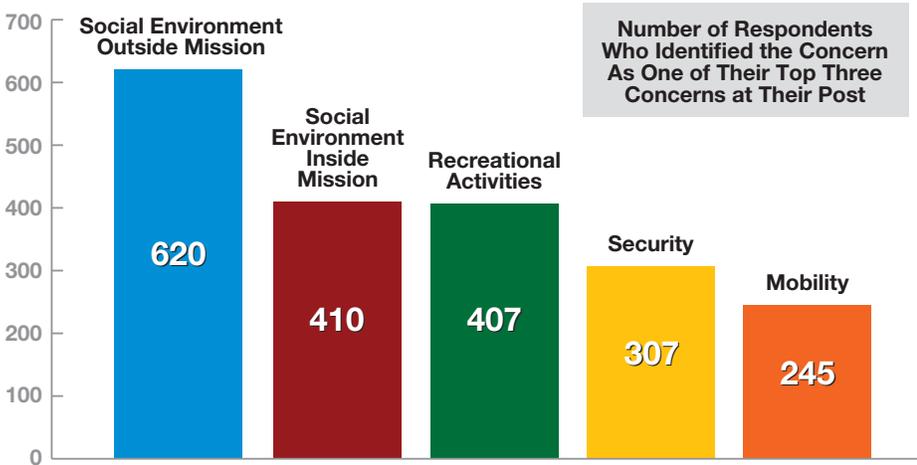
Foreign
Affairs
Day
'08

FLO Surveys Singles' View on Services

The Family Liaison Office received 973 responses to its first survey of Foreign Service singles. The survey assessed use of and satisfaction with community liaison office services at post and FLO services in Washington and sought to learn more about singles' issues.

For the survey, FLO defined "single" as anyone who is unmarried or has a long-term partner or is engaged, separated or separating, divorced or widowed. Sixty-six percent of respondents was female and 34 percent was male.

The biggest issue for singles at post was the social environment, inside and outside the mission. The next biggest was the availability of recreational activities. Other issues mentioned were security/safety, mobility and language.



Eighty-three percent of respondents said they participate in community liaison office activities at post at least sometimes. Asked why they don't participate, many said the activities are too geared toward families, and others cited interests outside the embassy.

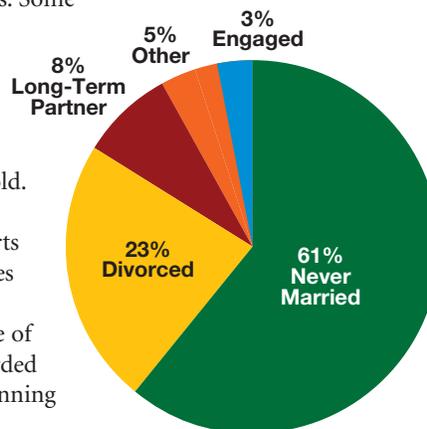
Single parents had somewhat different concerns. The biggest was the quality of education at post, followed by being a single parent, security issues and the availability of recreational activities and child care. Single parents tended to actively participate in CLO-sponsored activities and were more likely to contact FLO for information.

Asked about FLO, several respondents found the name off-putting, and only 11 percent thought FLO was concerned or very concerned about singles. Only 13 percent had ever visited the FLO Web site, www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo, but, of those who had, 69 percent said they found the information they were seeking.

Singles also used the survey to comment on administrative issues at post. Some singles felt their needs were not considered when housing decisions were made, that they are often the first to be called on to stay late or work overtime and that they are more likely to be asked to work over holidays. Some felt they were not given equal consideration in the assignments process.

Some respondents said the Department discriminates against those who have a partner or someone living with them who is not listed on their orders, known as a member of household.

FLO plans to raise all these concerns with management and will improve its outreach efforts to singles, working to design programs for singles at post and advocating for policies that are not based solely on marital status. Suggestions, some of which can be easily implemented, will be forwarded to CLOs at post. FLO sees the survey as the beginning of an ongoing dialogue on these issues.



STATE MAGAZINE

MAGAZINE STAFF

Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

Ed Warner
Deputy Editor

Bill Palmer
Writer/Editor

David L. Johnston
Art Director

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

James A. Forbes
Executive Secretary

Kelly Clements

Annette R. Cocchiaro

State Magazine (ISSN 1099-4165) is published monthly, except bimonthly in July and August, by the U.S. Department of State, 2201 C St., N.W., Washington, DC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing locations.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Send changes of address to *State Magazine*, 2401 E Street, N.W., SA-1, Room H-236, Washington, DC 20522-0108. You may also e-mail address changes to statemagazine@state.gov.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

State Magazine is available by paid subscription through the U.S. Government Printing Office by telephone at (202) 512-1800 or on the web at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

SUBMISSIONS

For details on submitting articles to *State Magazine*, request our guidelines, "Getting Your Story Told," by e-mail at statemagazine@state.gov; download them from our Web site at www.state.gov; or send your request in writing to *State Magazine*, 2401 E Street, N.W., HR/ER/SMG, SA-1, Room H-236, Washington, DC 20522-0108.

The submission deadline for the May issue is March 15. The deadline for the June issue is April 15.



Morning Danish

AMBASSADOR'S BIKE TOUR 'PEDALS' PUBLIC DIPLOMACY **BY ALISTAIR THOMSON**



The ambassador, far right, sets the pace for the tour's leaders. **Below:** A special coin was minted to commemorate the tour and was given to participants.

By day four of the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen's Rediscovery Bike Tour of Denmark, Ambassador James P. Cain had visited two major farms and a teachers' college while outpacing the local high school principal. Standing in an auditorium in sweatshirt and sneakers at a college some 60 miles from the Danish capital, he was peppered with students' questions about Iraq and Afghanistan and the Danish-U.S. relationship.

Then, with 50 kilometers of cycling still ahead, he and Danish Minister of Culture Brian Mikkelsen, one of many Danes who joined the tour, entered the school's gym, where Ambassador Cain took a crack at climbing a rock-face simulator.

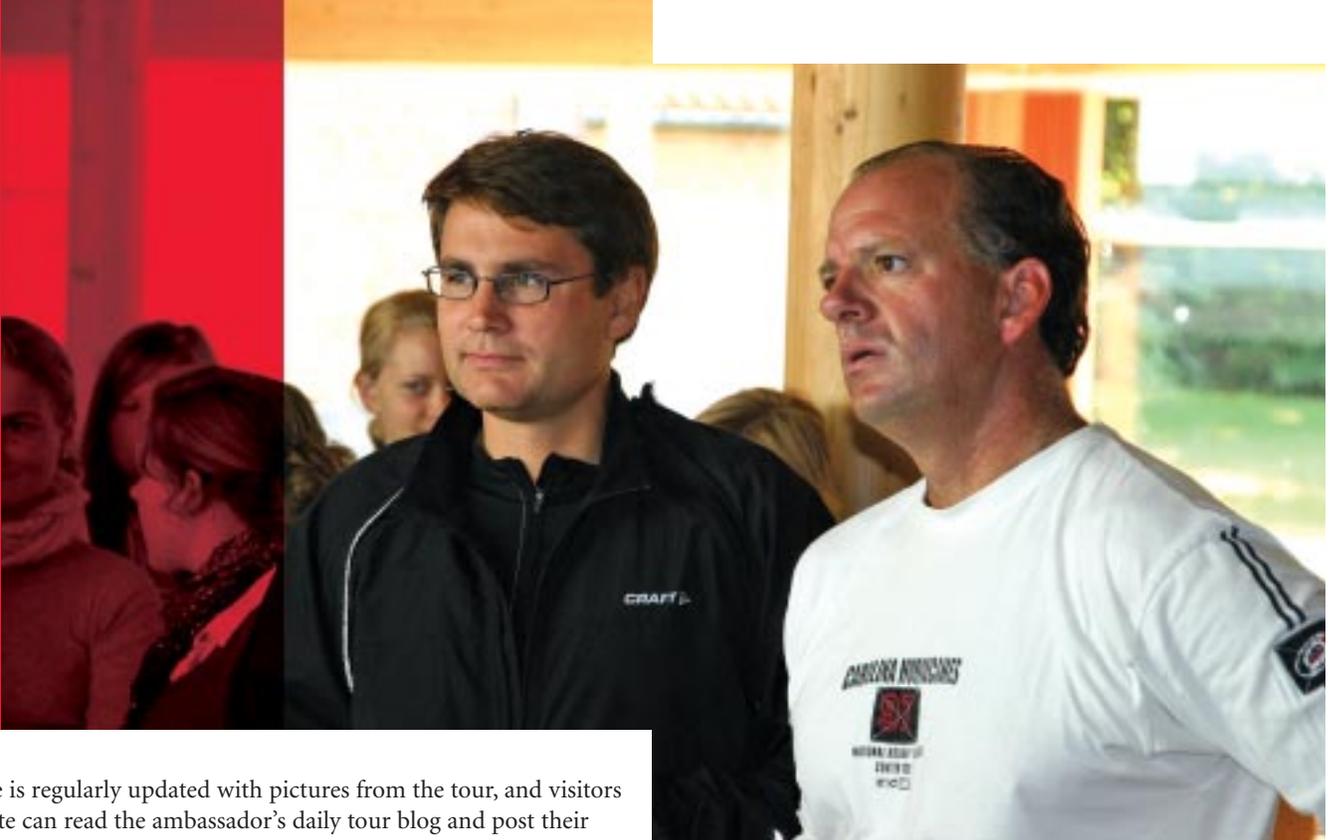
The September 2007 tour, the ambassador's first leg of a two-year, 1,800-kilometer tour of the back roads of mercifully flat Denmark, was conceived as the

centerpiece of a sports diplomacy initiative. Since then, the tour has become an effective way to broadly engage Danes on the state of U.S.-Danish relations. The second and final leg of the tour begins in April and concludes in July.

Each day of the 2007 tour was mapped out by Philip Holten, a Foreign Service National employee in the public affairs section, and all embassy sections and agencies helped orchestrate visits along the route that were linked to key mission goals. To plan, Holten talked to local authorities, companies and regional media and invited them to come along. Virtually every Dane owns a bike.

American and local staff frequently rode along with the ambassador, especially when the itinerary took him near an FSN's hometown or involved a visit with an important contact. The embassy





Web site is regularly updated with pictures from the tour, and visitors to the site can read the ambassador's daily tour blog and post their thoughts (<http://denmark.usembassy.gov/rediscoverytour.html>).

In trading his armored black Cadillac for a Danish racing bike, Ambassador Cain took diplomacy to the local level in a country that prides itself on a lack of pretense but where ambassadors are usually seen as remote figures. Over a week, he scaled a 300-foot wind turbine, talked trash with the director of a state-of-the-art recycling center, explained his bike-tour goals on Danish morning talk radio, visited a company producing biofuel enzymes and attended a cultural workshop for young people.

"I'm out here to get to know Denmark and the Danes," Ambassador Cain said on Danish national TV the first day of the trip. "Only by feeling, seeing and hearing the sights and sounds of Denmark will I really get to know what makes this great country tick. And only by getting out into the communities will I be able to explain why I think the U.S.-Danish relationship is so important."

This disarmingly simple recipe worked on many levels. In addition to strong community interest and heavy regional press coverage, the tour attracted enthusiastic attention among key mission contacts. Danish cabinet ministers, members of parliament, journalists, activists with nongovernmental organizations, students and community leaders all joined the tour.

This summer, the tour heads back to Copenhagen for its grand finale—a final leg with all guest riders invited to join in a ride that ends at the embassy's 4th of July reception. Likely, even more Danes will join the tour this year.

"I can honestly say that after two years in the job, this is the most important work I have done," Ambassador Cain said. "The single best way to understand people, inform them and influence them is to meet them face to face."

By the way, in the school auditorium, the ambassador did make it to the top of the rock-face simulator. He then gave the school principal a specially minted Rediscovery Tour coin and hit the road.

With 50 kilometers to go and events ahead ranging from a business reception to a visit to a pig farm, Ambassador Cain had no time to lose. ■

The author is a press specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen.

Above: Denmark's minister of culture, Brian Mikkelsen, left, confers with Ambassador Cain during the tour. **Below:** During the tour, Ambassador Cain, left, met with the owner of the Texas Square DJO Country & Western Store, Jørgen Olsen. **Bottom:** Planning the tour are, from left, Deputy Chief of Mission Sandra Kaiser, the ambassador's office management specialist Jan Scott, Public Affairs Officer Thomas Leary, Public Affairs staffer Philip Holten, Ambassador Cain, the author and, at rear, Commercial Service employee Bjarke Fredericksen.



PHOTOGRAPHS: PHILIP HOLTEN; (OPPOSITE PAGE): CORBIS

FSNS PLAY KEY ROLES IN
VIRTUAL PRESENCE POSTS
BY GILBERT CALLAWAY

KEY_INGREDIENTS





Virtual Presence Posts provide some functions of an American diplomatic post through the use of travel, improved interagency collaboration, digital video conferences, Web chats and dedicated Web sites.

Though virtual, VPPs rely on people, particularly Foreign Service National employees and Locally Employed staff in the host nation. A reflection of their importance came two years ago during a VPP-focused seminar organized by the Office of eDiplomacy and the Foreign Service Institute. Of the 43 participants, 11 were FSNs, and three of the seven Extra

Mile awards given there for special contributions to the VPP concept went to FSNs.

With more than 30 VPPs being planned, it's worth considering the FSN and LES contribution at three of the world's 43 VPPs—Canada, Panama and New Zealand.

Canada has three VPPs, one each for the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut. The coordinator for the Northwest Territories VPP, Betty Rice, is a public affairs assistant at the U.S. Consulate General in Calgary. She has accompanied the ambassador and consul general to cities in the Territories, helped set up a Web-based chat with the ambassador for high school

students in Yellowknife and arranged a book donation to a library involving the local mayor.

FOND MEMORIES

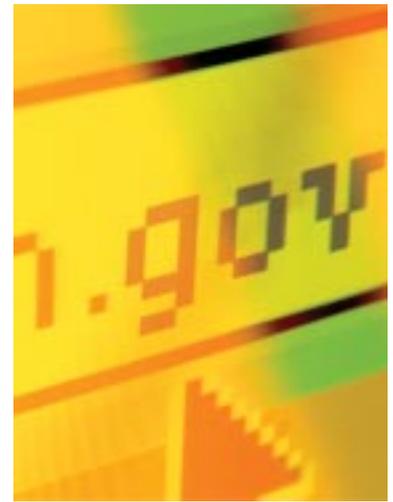
Rice said her best memories from her VPP work are of teachers grateful for the book donation, which involved small, remote schools; teenagers working with theater professionals from the United States; and high school students Web-chatting with the ambassador, who was linked to them across the frozen miles of northern Canada.

Rice said she and other FSNs participate in monthly digital video conferences of the “virtual country team.”

“The key to the success of the VPPs in Canada is that we are a team of Foreign Service officers and FSNs,” she said.

In Panama, Cultural Affairs Specialist Shaleen White arranged for a Florida International University professor to attend a cultural exhibit and speak to the Chamber of Commerce in Colón. She also accompanied the ambassador and cultural affairs officer during the presentation of more

“LE staff members provide continuity for the VPPs—without LE staff, a VPP might find itself starting from scratch every couple of years as U.S. officers rotate, or it might lose its driving force.”



Islands Development Program of the East-West Center in Hawaii traveled to Christchurch, Vivian accompanied him and arranged for him to speak to honor students at a university. She also arranged a Middle East expert's visit to a New Zealand university with the largest class of New Zealanders studying the Middle East. And she set up a digital videoconference between the U.S. Embassy in Wellington and the Office of eDiplomacy to discuss VPP initiatives in New Zealand.



Opposite page: Christine Vivian, right, and Dr. Gerald Finin of the East-West Center in Hawaii visit Canterbury University in Christchurch. **Above:** Yellowknife, Canada, high school students engage in a Web chat with the ambassador in Ottawa. **Left:** At a book presentation to the Hay River Library, Betty Rice, center, stands with Regional Librarian Alison Hopkins, left, and Hay River Mayor Diana Ehman.

POPULAR SITE

In a recent month the VPP Web site registered more than 1,000 hits from countries around the world, including Australia, Canada, China, Singapore and Spain. Aside from news and general information about the United States and the South Island, the Web site has information

on U.S. visa and immigration procedures.

To work, VPPs need the support of the ambassador, deputy chief of mission and key mission sections, as well as the help of dedicated LE staff and FSNs. For more details and assistance with VPPs, e-mail the Office of eDiplomacy at VPPActionTeam@state.gov or go to the Web sites of the VPP Community (<http://vpp.state.gov>), the Office of eDiplomacy (<http://ediplomacy.state.gov>) or Diplopedia (<http://diplopedia.state.gov>). ■

than 400 books to the Bilingual Arab Academy in Colón, arranged for an English teaching specialist to conduct workshops and set up a performance and master workshop for U.S. jazz artists.

All these activities were prominently featured on the VPP Web site, maintained by FSN Ramón Real, and emphasized the importance the United States attaches to Colón, Panama's second-largest city.

PROVIDING CONTINUITY

"LE staff members provide continuity for the VPPs—without LE staff, a VPP might find itself starting from scratch every couple of years as U.S. officers rotate, or it might

lose its driving force," White said.

FSN Christine Vivian, director of the American Reference Center in Wellington, New Zealand, is also the coordinator for the South Island VPP. In the first three months of that VPP's existence, she visited key South Island cities in support of several VPP programs. She has also traveled with the ambassador and public affairs officer for a digital videoconference between a university and the U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory to celebrate the Dunedin Science Festival.

In support of the VPP, she has also traveled with the ambassador to Christchurch, and when the interim director of the Pacific

The author is the senior adviser on VPPs in the Office of eDiplomacy.

Cultured Communication

MISSION SEMINAR DETAILS MALAWIAN WAY OF LIFE **BY KEVIN SULLIVAN**

In a world of instant communication, U.S. missions overseas still need a deep understanding of their local cultures to produce accurate analyses, make programs work and have their messages resonate with the people.

How to achieve that local awareness? Area studies courses at the Foreign Service Institute help, but can only scratch the surface. Reading relevant literature is also essential, but often leaves a taste for more practical knowledge.

Ultimately, shouldn't a post's programs play a role in promoting cultural understanding among its employees?

In Malawi, Ambassador Alan Eastham initiated a two-day, in-depth orientation program for new arrivals at the KuNgoni Center of Culture and Art, an impressive institution dedicated to cataloguing and preserving Malawi's traditional culture. The KuNgoni Center's director, a Canadian priest, the Rev. Claude Boucher, has dedicated the past four decades to deciphering the traditional beliefs and customs of Malawi's major ethnic groups. Boucher illuminated this often hidden world for a group of U.S. mission members from the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Peace Corps. They were surprised and fascinated by much of what they learned.

Fitting In

For instance, they learned that most Malawians grow up in rural villages where there are strong incentives to fit in. Villagers who begin to acquire more wealth through more productive farming practices or a side business may well find themselves accused of practicing witchcraft. This can leave them ostracized, and has important implications for foreign donors designing development programs involving model farms or other peer leadership schemes. Care must be taken for any proposed change to be welcomed by communities, rather than demonized.

Another eye-opener from the seminar was the strong role of rural women in a country where women often appear to be

oppressed. In most of Malawi, bloodlines are traced through the mother, and a man is expected to accommodate within his wife's family. A child has many "mothers" since every aunt is considered his or her mother as well. When the head of a village dies, the women get together to discuss who should succeed the chief—and it may be a woman or a man. It is essential to understand the matrilineal system to sort out Malawian politics and find the right entry point in the community for assistance efforts.

Participants also learned about an elaborate series of beliefs concerning sexual relations, including such practical considerations as which people can be in close proximity and which cannot. The community's traditional sex educators are responsible for transmitting these beliefs. This makes them an essential target audience for any program designed to reduce Malawi's 14 percent HIV/AIDS rate.

At an even more basic level, Boucher explained that it is not Malawian custom for a visitor to march into a village or the home of his host and introduce himself; rather, he should signal his arrival with a modest amount of noise and wait to be recognized, greeted and invited in. Important occasions are marked by ritual brewing and consumption of beer. Visitors offered beer should respond with a low "waaaaa!" and then drink deeply before passing the container to other revelers.

Closing Dance

With a morning of traditional dancing, the course ended at the KuNgoni Center. Dancers clad in animal skins, exotic feathers and colorful local fabrics danced, and some course participants took to the floor as well, using steps they had learned earlier.

Thanks to the seminar, newly arrived Americans with little sense of Malawian culture gained a better insight into how Malawians feel about their world, an understanding that would make them feel more at home, appreciate their hosts' culture and be better able to accomplish their missions.



Clockwise from left: This pillar stands before the KuNgoni Center, a 150-year-old Catholic mission that has thrived by incorporating Malawian cultural traditions; Seminar participants gather at the KuNgoni Center; Dancers from Malawi's secret Gule Wamkulu society perform during the seminar; From left, Office Management Specialist Ellen Bremenstul, CDC official Amanda Wadud, USAID officer Kate Wolf and Peace Corps officer Christine Strater pick up some new dance moves.

Many course participants said they expected to find a challenge in determining the extent to which urbanized Malawians continued to be shaped by the traditional culture of their parents and home villages. But they agreed that they were better equipped now to understand a society in transition.

The U.S. Mission in Malawi was fortunate to have the KuNgoni Center program available for its cultural orientation. Other posts may have similar untapped resources and need only set aside a short amount of time and a modest training budget to accomplish some important objectives. If such resources are not available, the post's management may want to consider putting together its own

program, using in-house resources such as senior Foreign Service National employees or outside assistance from universities and cultural institutions.

The multidisciplinary approach worked well for the seminar, combining history, sociology, music and even local etiquette and cuisine. Now, the U.S. Mission in Malawi is considering how to integrate continuing cultural education with local language instruction. ■

The author is deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Lilongwe, Malawi.



BLUE DISTAS

PROTECTING AFGHANISTAN'S
MOUNTAIN LAKES

BY CRAIG BRYANT

The road to Afghanistan's Band-i-Amir lakes is not an easy one. The lakes are just 50 miles west of Bamyān City, the capital of Bamyān province and site of the nearest airstrip. But the trip takes at least three hours on a rutted, dusty, single-lane dirt track better suited for donkeys than vehicles, even those with four-wheel drive. Despite the bone-jarring ride, on weekend mornings minivans jammed with Afghans and the occasional foreign tourist race to the lakes for a few hours.

This is the road employees of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyān take to help the government of Afghanistan establish the Band-i-Amir lakes as Afghanistan's first natural protected area. In March 2007, a science fellow from the embassy in Kabul, detailed to the State Department from the Environmental Protection Agency, began working with the new Afghan National Environmental Protection Agency to help it draft environmental regulations and

develop enforcement capabilities.

Because the lakes are in a fragile ecosystem, the hoped-for increase in tourism poses a risk. At one time, there were ibex, wolves and deer in the area, but they have been almost completely wiped out

by overhunting. In 1973, the government of Afghanistan designated the Band-i-Amir region the country's first national park. But after years of political upheaval, that declaration was never ratified into law, and the lakes lack any official protection.

DEEP BLUE

It is easy to understand why visitors are drawn to the lakes and why this area may one day be an international tourist destination. The chain of six lakes sits 10,000 feet

high in the Hindu Kush mountain range. The climate here is semiarid, and the topography is high plains, comparable to northern Colorado or western Montana. The lakes are clear, intensely blue pools of deep water surrounded by sheer red sandstone bluffs. Their water comes from underground springs with high mineral content. The hue of the lakes' surface can change suddenly, based on the light.

In 2006, *Time* magazine included the Band-i-Amir lakes in a list of the world's "Best Natural Wonders." Of interest to geologists are the travertine dams that separate the lakes from each other, formed by calcium carbonate-rich water flowing from fault lines in the earth and hardening into white travertine. In the Dari language, Band-i-Amir means "dam of the king."

The Hazaras, the largest ethnic group in Bamyān, consider the lakes a sacred area. A shrine stands on the shore of the most-visited lake.



Clockwise from left: A scenic overlook; Afghans enjoy using paddle boats on the Band-i-Amir lakes; A mosque stands guard over the lakes; Bamyan Provincial Governor Habiba Sarabi makes a point at a meeting of the Band-i-Amir Protected Area Committee; An Afghan man carries reeds he collected near the lakes.



While it has been peaceful since the fall of the Taliban, Bamyan remains one of the poorest provinces in Afghanistan. Most of its people eke out a meager living from farming or grazing livestock. Provincial Governor Habiba Sarabi, Afghanistan's first woman governor, has identified tourism as one of the cornerstones of her economic development strategy. Increased tourism to the lakes area would provide commercial and employment opportunities for the people of Bamyan.

PROTECTION A PRIORITY

Establishing official protection of the Band-i-Amir lakes area has been a priority for Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture and NEPA. Embassy Science Fellow Clay Miller, an EPA wetlands specialist, has assisted NEPA on a draft law for protected areas. He consulted with organizations such as the Wildlife Conservation Society and the United Nations Environment

Program on how the lakes area might be administered, and has advised NEPA on how to work with other Afghan national ministries and with Bamyan provincial officials.

Last summer, Miller and an embassy economics officer, William Taliaferro, traveled to Band-i-Amir to see the lakes and surrounding area, talk with local residents and community leaders, and assess the potential impact on the local economy of designating the lakes a protected area. A military unit from the New Zealand Defence Force leads the Bamyan PRT, and a small group of Kiwi soldiers accompanied the American officers to Band-i-Amir.

Their visit convinced the American officers that the Band-i-Amir lakes area should be Afghanistan's top environmental priority. Afghans who live near the lakes want them protected and have formed the Band-i-Amir Protected Area Committee, composed of Bamyan

provincial officials and representatives from local communities.

The committee is developing an interim park management plan. On completion of the plan, the Band-i-Amir lakes can become a provisional national park while the Afghan Parliament considers legislation giving the lakes permanent protected status. In the long term, Afghans hope that the lakes will be designated a World Heritage Site by the United Nations.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul and the PRT continue to be involved in the effort to protect the lakes. As Afghanistan grows more peaceful, and the Band-i-Amir lakes become better known, visitors from around the world will soon be able to enjoy their beauty. ■

The author is now the desk officer for Afghanistan and, as the Department's representative on the PRT in Bamyan, joined Miller and Taliaferro on the trip to the lakes.

The sun breaks through the clouds in this panoramic view looking down on Yaounde from nearby Mt. Febe.
Photograph by David C. Harmantas

Cameroon

DIVERSITY CREATES 'AFRICA IN MINIATURE' **BY MICHAEL ROTH**

POST OF THE MONTH>>>

Yaounde



COUNTRY>>> Cameroon

CAPITAL>>> Yaounde

TOTAL AREA>>> 475,400 square kilometers

APPROXIMATE SIZE>>> Slightly larger than California

GOVERNMENT>>> Republic; multiparty presidential regime

INDEPENDENCE>>> January 1, 1960

POPULATION>>> 18 million

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH>>> 52.8 years

LANGUAGES>>> 24 major African language groups, English and French

CURRENCY>>> Comunaute Financiere Africaine franc (XAF)

PER CAPITA INCOME>>> \$2,300

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE>>> 30 percent

IMPORT PARTNERS>>> France (23.6 percent), Nigeria (13.2 percent) and China (7.3 percent)

EXPORT PARTNERS>>> Spain (21.3 percent), Italy (15.4 percent) and France (11.6 percent)

INTERNET COUNTRY CODE>>> .cm



Cameroon is best known for its obsession with soccer, and the national team—the “Indomitable Lions”—has won admirers worldwide for its impressive play in Olympic and World Cup contests. But there is much more to this Central African country than football frenzy.

Cameroon truly represents “Africa in miniature”—the country’s tourism slogan. Its topography includes every African landscape: dense forest, savannah, beachfront, mountains, volcanoes and the littoral region of the strategic Gulf of Guinea. National parks and nature reserves provide glimpses of elephants, giraffes, lions, leopards, chimpanzees, gorillas, crocodiles and hippos. There is little to match the serene beauty of the black sands of Limbe, fed by the volcanic ash of Mount Cameroon, as the sun sets over the Atlantic Ocean.

A largely agricultural nation that exports cocoa, coffee, fruit, cotton and rubber, Cameroon also has rich mineral and timber resources. It is a second-tier oil-producing country; the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, constructed by a consortium including Exxon Mobil and Chevron, is among the principal U.S. investments in sub-Saharan Africa. After one of the largest privatizations in the continent’s history, American-based AES now manages Cameroon’s electricity through its Cameroonian entity, AES-Sonel. With American investments as diverse as fruits (Dole and Del Monte) and finance (Citigroup and Beneficial Life Insurance), the United States is now the leading foreign investor in Cameroon.

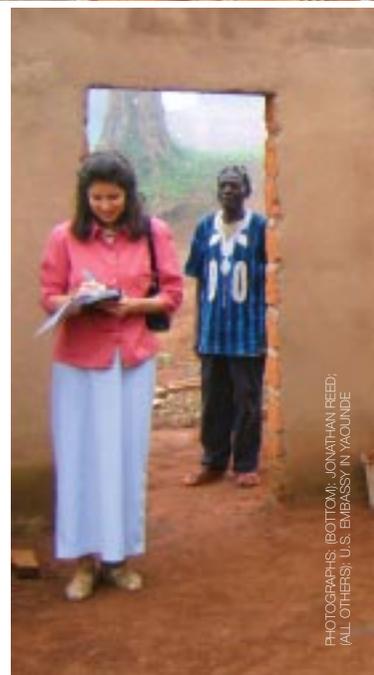
The U.S. Embassy in Yaounde celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations with Cameroon last year with a photography exhibit that drew on all aspects of the bilateral partnership (*State Magazine*, November 2007). The importance of the relationship was underscored in February 2006 when Cameroonian President Paul Biya and Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer inaugurated a new, \$55 million embassy compound. The city of Yaounde joined the celebration, naming the new street fronting the embassy Avenue Rosa Parks.

Rich Heritage

Cameroon boasts more than 280 indigenous languages. With its multiplicity of ethnicities, the country is rich in dance, folk arts and magical tales. Added to this mix is Cameroon’s long exposure to Portuguese, Spanish, German, French and English traders and colonialists. In fact, Cameroon gets its name from the Portuguese Rio dos Camerões (River of Prawns).

A popular saying holds that “Cameroon is bilingual, but Cameroonians are not.” French is dominant in eight of the ten provinces, while English is widely spoken in the northwest and southwest provinces, which border English-speaking Nigeria.

In addition to the cultural mosaic, religious diversity contributes to an atmosphere of tolerance. Cameroon scores high on religious freedom, but its record on human rights has been spotty. It has made progress, however, and continues to address problems such as child labor, human trafficking, police brutality, squalid prison conditions and corruption. The United States provides assistance for social programs and law enforcement to combat these scourges.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (BOTTOM) JONATHAN REED; (ALL OTHERS) U.S. EMBASSY IN YAOUNDE



Clockwise from left: Embassy employees Leora Munoz, left, and Phillippe Zokou inspect the progress of classroom construction in Alou, partially financed through the Ambassador's Self Help Fund; Consular Officer Marsha Lance, left, and consular staffers Catherine Mbia, Berthe Takang and Ethel Wesley show off their Women's Day outfits; Children at an orphanage listen to their English teacher; Former Ambassador Niels Marquardt, under the boom microphones, and other embassy staffers greet Cameroon's President Paul Biya at the inauguration of the new embassy in 2006.





Clockwise from above: The entrance to the embassy looks out on a green lawn; A friendly hippo comes ashore in Garoua; Storm clouds create a dramatic vista of Yaounde. Embassy families join in the festivities at Fouban Palace during the Nguon Festival, where the sultan must answer public criticism from members of his Bamoun people before he can resume his throne; Dancers perform at the Palace of Bafut in the Northwest Province; Trees shade the rocky beach at Kribi.





PHOTOGRAPHS: (CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT) RICHARD W. NELSON; U.S. EMBASSY IN YAOUNDE; DAVID C. HARMANTAS; MICHAEL ROTH; RICHARD W. NELSON; AND CHRIS WILSON

The United States and its numerous nongovernmental partners also address problems associated with HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and teams from Johns Hopkins University and the University of California at Los Angeles with funding from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, have conducted malaria- and AIDS-related studies and treatment programs. The Gates and Clinton foundations have also sponsored work in these areas.

Second Lung

The environment is an embassy priority. To help protect the tropical forests in the Congo River Basin, known as the earth's "second lung" for the oxygen it generates, U.S. funds funneled through the U.S. Agency for International Development provide grants to community and regional organizations to help slow the rate of deforestation and protect biodiversity. In the arid north, U.S. funds help farmers plant crops with harvest cycles that reduce elephant-human conflict. The embassy also combats wildlife trafficking and supports projects promoting water conservation.

An increasingly active military-to-military relationship with Cameroon is led by the embassy's Defense attaché office. Security cooperation priorities include maritime security, border security, peace-support operations and humanitarian assistance.

Cameroon's navy and marine corps are active participants in the Africa Partnership Station program to enhance maritime safety and security. In the past year, the program has brought four U.S. Navy ship visits.

Cameroon's army is a partner in the U.S. Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program and is taking on a larger role in regional peace support operations. Humanitarian assistance roles include well-digging projects, military medical missions, biodiversity projects and the Defense HIV/AIDS Prevention Program.

The embassy is medium-sized and has 285 American and local employees. The mission's close-knit community fosters frequent social activities, such as the Marine movie nights that allow employees to unwind at the end of the week. Casual dinners and potlucks offer a moveable feast for embassy families and friends. Some employees join the hordes climbing nearby Mount Febe at the crack of dawn, while others enjoy golf or horseback riding at clubs adjacent to the embassy compound. In the evenings, pulsating music emanates from local hot spots.

One of the post's biggest draws is the American School of Yaounde, which provides pre-K-to-12 education based on an American curriculum. It offers advanced placement courses at the high-school level. The school is a social center, with a restaurant and pool, and provides an interface with the local community for sports events and craft shows.

Locals have a saying: *Cameroon, c'est le Cameroon*—"Cameroon is Cameroon." There is a distinct quality to Cameroon's way of life, where bilingualism, cultural diversity, stability and bio-diversity make it a unique place to live and work. ■

The author is a vice consul at the U.S. Embassy in Yaounde. Information Officer Judith Ravin, Political-Economic Chief Scott Ticknor, Political-Economic Deputy Tad Brown and Defense Attaché Matt Sousa contributed to this article.



TOTAL RECALL

Since 2001, the Bureau of Human Resources' Knowledge Center system has provided a more efficient way to access, retrieve and distribute targeted human resources data. A comprehensive system for personnel and position reporting, KC can provide authorized users with up-to-date information for analysis, planning and decisionmaking.

Often, these data are crucial. In response to the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, HR specialists used KC to immediately get a list of all Department employees with the needed language skills or who had been posted in Thailand. Department officials quickly determined who could be deployed to assist with the recovery.

KC also is the ultimate resource for the management data used to report progress on human capital goals in support of the President's Management Agenda. KC's independent maintenance of bureau data supports several strategic management goals and helps the Department address Office of Personnel Management competencies, such as accountability and technical credibility.

KC is part of the Department's Integrated Personnel Management System. It is a Web-based system that contains data from the Global Employee Management System, Human Resources Online and the

Post Personnel System. IPMS data are extracted, organized into a series of tables and then stored for efficient retrieval.

Users can access KC from their desktops to run queries, analyze data and produce reports in a variety of presentation formats. In 2007 alone, 317 users accessed KC and created or edited a total of 4,118 distinct reports. These reports were accessed and refreshed a total of 22,428 times and included IPMS source data for employee rosters, administrative actions, awards, medical clearances, overseas employment histories, staffing patterns and local headcounts.

A common KC report is the Staffing Pattern, an overview of the Department's bureau and office staffing. Distributed monthly, the report reflects information on all employees, based on their position in the Department hierarchy, organization code, domestic/overseas assignment, manager level, who they report to and their position number. Staffing Patterns include alphabetical lists of employees, domestic staffing patterns and summaries, overseas staffing patterns and summaries, and staffing pattern errors.

Another popular KC report is the Management Timeliness Report, an overview of the time taken to process SF-50 notices of personnel action. Reports of this nature support performance

ONLINE SYSTEM HOLDS EMPLOYEE DATA, PROVIDES REPORTS
BY SHANNON GALEY-CRIST



Opposite page: The Knowledge Center team includes, back row from left, Frank Casale, Ken Norris, Chris Fisher, Faizan Khan and Cleve Wehle. In the front row, from left, are Lori Roane, Gladys Wiggins, Shabana Qureshi, Kimlien Do and Cedric Lewis. **Left:** Team leaders in the Knowledge Center are, from left, Lori Roane, Gladys Wiggins and Frank Casale. **Above:** Lativia Dennis is a training consultant in KC.

measurement analysis, which is essential to the Department's Centers of Excellence pilot program. Other significant reports include Worldwide Position Counts, Foreign Service New Hires, Length of Service, Leadership and Management Training, and Former Political Appointees.

"Knowledge Center provides one of the most flexible and intuitive interfaces for developing reports that I've ever seen," said Oliver Smith, an information technology specialist in HR's Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment. "I can easily create and maintain simple and complex reports."

KNOWLEDGE CENTER

Becoming KC-Savvy

KC provides managers with access to information when they need it. Managers, therefore, should

- Be informed. Visit HR/EX/SOD on the Intranet, click on "Knowledge Center" and review the background information, frequently asked questions, user Quick Tips and KC OnDemand training tool.
- Get trained. Sign up for the course PA-193, Basic Knowledge Center Reporting Tool, which teaches how to create, save and send reports using KC.
- Activate your account. KC access forms are available after completing the basic training course.

Recently, KC was upgraded to Business Objects XI and Informatica 8.1, which allowed for better integration with products such as Microsoft Excel. The upgrade also enhanced its ad hoc reporting capabilities, enabled extensive report formatting options and improved KC's performance, scalability and reliability.

Another KC project is the workers' compensation reporting universe, which provides for easy analysis of data that are updated weekly from the Department of Labor. HR's Office of Employee Relations can now electronically reconcile workers' compensation payments with DOL's quarterly chargeback report. This improves operational efficiencies and can identify discrepancies between the Department's and DOL's compensation, return-to-work and national case management record keeping.

Responding to new congressional mandates, KC is capturing data and tracking Department functions such as telework opportunities. In addition, KC has new features that enhance its data-reporting and analysis capabilities. These capabilities allow HR to analyze and use its vast amount of personnel data, with no additional software installation and minimal training.

KC supports the Department's five core human resources management business processes, and its data collection, analysis and reporting capabilities let HR reduce transaction processing overhead, enhance data sharing and improve data integrity and quality. KC enhances interaction across departments, allowing for a sharper collective vision of the Department's mission, strategy and goals.

The only way for managers to truly be in the know is for them to know their employees, and KC can help make that happen. ■

The author is a communications consultant to the HR Executive Office.



One Big Idea

THE U.S. EMBASSY IN STOCKHOLM PROMOTES ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

BY ROBERT HILTON

Besides engaging the Swedish government and public to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives, the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm is encouraging U.S.-Swedish cooperation in seeking a breakthrough in alternative energy technology.

The effort, which the embassy calls the One Big Thing initiative, was derived from Ambassador Michael Wood's idea that a single big objective was needed for the mission's work. By the time the One Big Thing was defined and announced to the Swedish public, the project's name was so ingrained the staff decided to keep using it.

Swedes support seeking an alternative energy breakthrough because it will help address global warming, a concern for many Swedes. The embassy has thus generated goodwill and political capital that benefits all aspects of the bilateral relationship.

Of 28 goals initially established for the first year of the One Big Thing, 25 have been completely or partially fulfilled. The complete list, posted on the embassy Web site, includes these successes:

- The ambassador and the Foreign Commercial Service created a list of 41 investable Swedish companies in the green technology sector and distributed information about the firms to venture capitalists.
- The embassy brought the U.S. Department of Energy, the Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Volvo Corporation, maker of Mack Trucks, together in a \$12 million deal that will test hybrid trucks and efficient vehicle drivetrains in the United States.
- The Department of Energy and Ministry of Enterprise agreed to cooperate in a variety of renewable energy research areas, and a binational working group identified U.S. and Swedish government funding programs for which Swedish and American partnerships can submit proposals.
- The ambassador, in speeches and media events, outlined the U.S. policy on climate and energy issues and explained the One Big Thing.



Opposite page: Ambassador Mike Wood, center, inspects a solar panel with Lund University Professor Björn Karlsson, left. At rear is Hans Möller, director of a technology incubator organization. The author is at right. **Above:** James Boyd, vice chair of the California Energy Commission, right, discusses climate change policy with Anders Wejryd, archbishop of the Church of Sweden, at an embassy lunch. **Right:** Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm, center, Ambassador Mike Wood, left, and Swedish Deputy Prime Minister/Minister for Enterprise and Energy Maud Olofsson at the signing of an agreement to deploy Swedish waste-to-energy technology at a Michigan paper mill.

To further U.S.-Swedish dialogue, the embassy encouraged congressional delegations to visit Sweden to see how the country has achieved economic growth while decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, the embassy now gets all its electricity from renewable sources—95 percent from hydropower and the remainder from wind, solar and biomass. It will also use high-efficiency lightbulbs. Embassy-owned housing is being converted to geothermal heating when possible.

Also this year, an updated list of possible investments will be presented to American investors on the East Coast, and the first Fulbright Distinguished Professor in Alternative Energy Technology will arrive in Sweden.

The One Big Thing is starting to focus more on policy questions because Sweden will hold the European Union presidency in the second half of 2009. The embassy wants to finalize the shape of a post-2012 climate change agreement. The embassy will make the case that a post-2012 framework for climate change must be environmentally effective, economically sustainable, global and flexible enough to accommodate a diverse range of national circumstances

and broad social and economic goals.

“I’m proud of what we have done,” said Ambassador Wood, “but I want to achieve even more. World energy demand is only going to increase, making the need for an alternative energy breakthrough even more pronounced. The One Big Thing is all about finding that breakthrough and making it real.”

Ambassador Wood said that, after his confirmation, he asked the staff for a list of everything the embassy was doing and then asked the country team to pare that list of 50 items down to 10. To pick the One Big Thing item from the 10, he said it had to be important, achievable and measurable.

“Looking back,” he said, “I think we were just in front of the wave. We started talking about climate change and the new energy technologies we need to cut emissions just before this sudden burst of public awareness about the problem and the clamor for action.

“Well, we’re acting.” ■

The author is counselor for public affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm.



Members of the EPPD staff, gathered for a meeting, are from left Andrew Weinschenk, Viktor Sidabras, Richard Huff, David Burnett, Nancy Smith-Nissley, Lillian Wasvary and Jonathan Erath.

EPPD

ON ECONOMICS, THIS OFFICE HAS THE ANSWERS
BY MICHAEL CAVEY

The Office of Economic Policy Analysis and Public Diplomacy in the Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs combines the analysis and development of economic policy options with domestic and international outreach. The office, in the Marshall wing of the Harry S Truman building, also promotes policies that spur growth, expand economic freedom, encourage investment and enhance worldwide economic security.

EPPD does so by analyzing the effectiveness of U.S. policies; evaluating the policy

implications of emerging, cross-cutting economic issues; assessing opportunities for policy initiatives and changes; and engaging the private sector in the State Department's policy planning and development process.

EPPD also helps EEB's assistant secretary advocate for U.S. economic policies and builds policy support networks and coalitions through outreach to media, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, business and civic groups and educational institutions. In addition,

EPPD leads EEB's efforts to promote cooperation with Congress on international economic issues.

New Matrix

In 2005, EEB responded to a need for centralized economic policy information from around the world and created a Web-based matrix of economic indicators that provides senior policymakers and posts worldwide with up-to-date economic information, customizable for a country or region. The matrix now contains some 90 economic indicators and policy tools that highlight the degree of U.S. economic engagement with a country or region. It has been extremely useful in identifying potential areas for U.S. policy engagement.

Recognizing the pivotal role of the private sector in foreign affairs, EPPD promotes transparent private sector input into the policy development process. The office serves as executive secretariat for the Department's Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy, which

advises the Department on international economic policy. Committee membership includes senior representatives from the American business, labor, environmental, academic, legal and public interest communities. Recent meetings have tackled such issues as using economic empowerment to counter terrorism, the impact of free trade agreements on regional security and stability, U.S. economic engagement in specific countries and major policy initiatives such as the President's Malaria Initiative.

Corporate Excellence

EPPD also manages the Secretary of State's Award for Corporate Excellence program, the Department's premier outreach event to the business community. The award, established by the State Department in 1999, recognizes the important role U.S. businesses play abroad as good corporate citizens by promoting best practices, good governance and democratic values. The award also highlights the Department's increasing role in business-related issues.

U.S. companies are nominated for the award by chiefs of mission, and winners are recognized in a ceremony hosted by the Secretary of State in Washington, D.C. The ceremony is attended by representatives from Congress, the diplomatic corps and the business and NGO communities. Chiefs of mission, in-country company executives and guests participate via satellite. In 2008, ACE will celebrate its 10th anniversary.

At a Glance

Office name
Office of Economic Policy Analysis
and Public Diplomacy

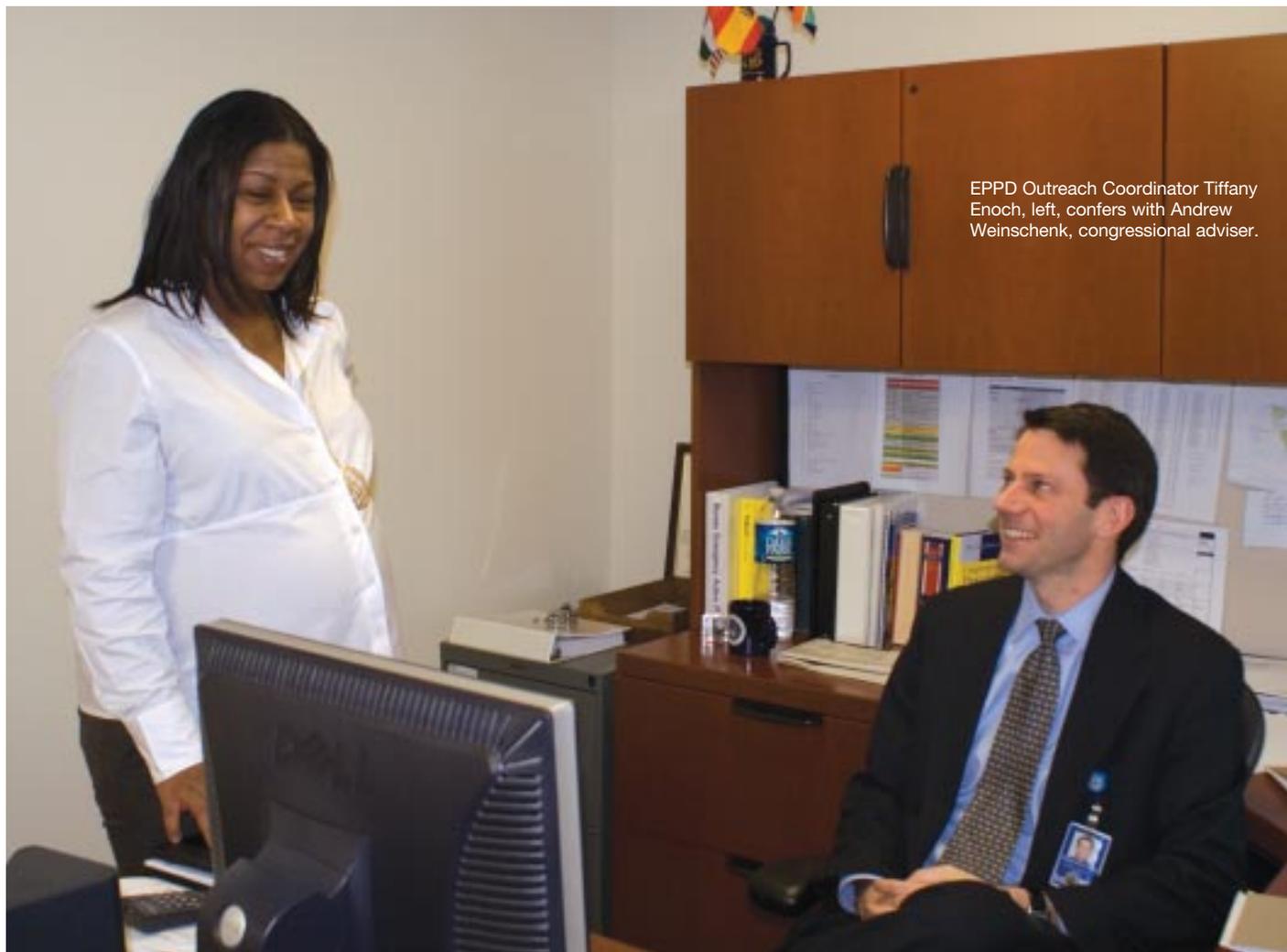
Symbol
EEB/EPPD

Office director
David R. Burnett

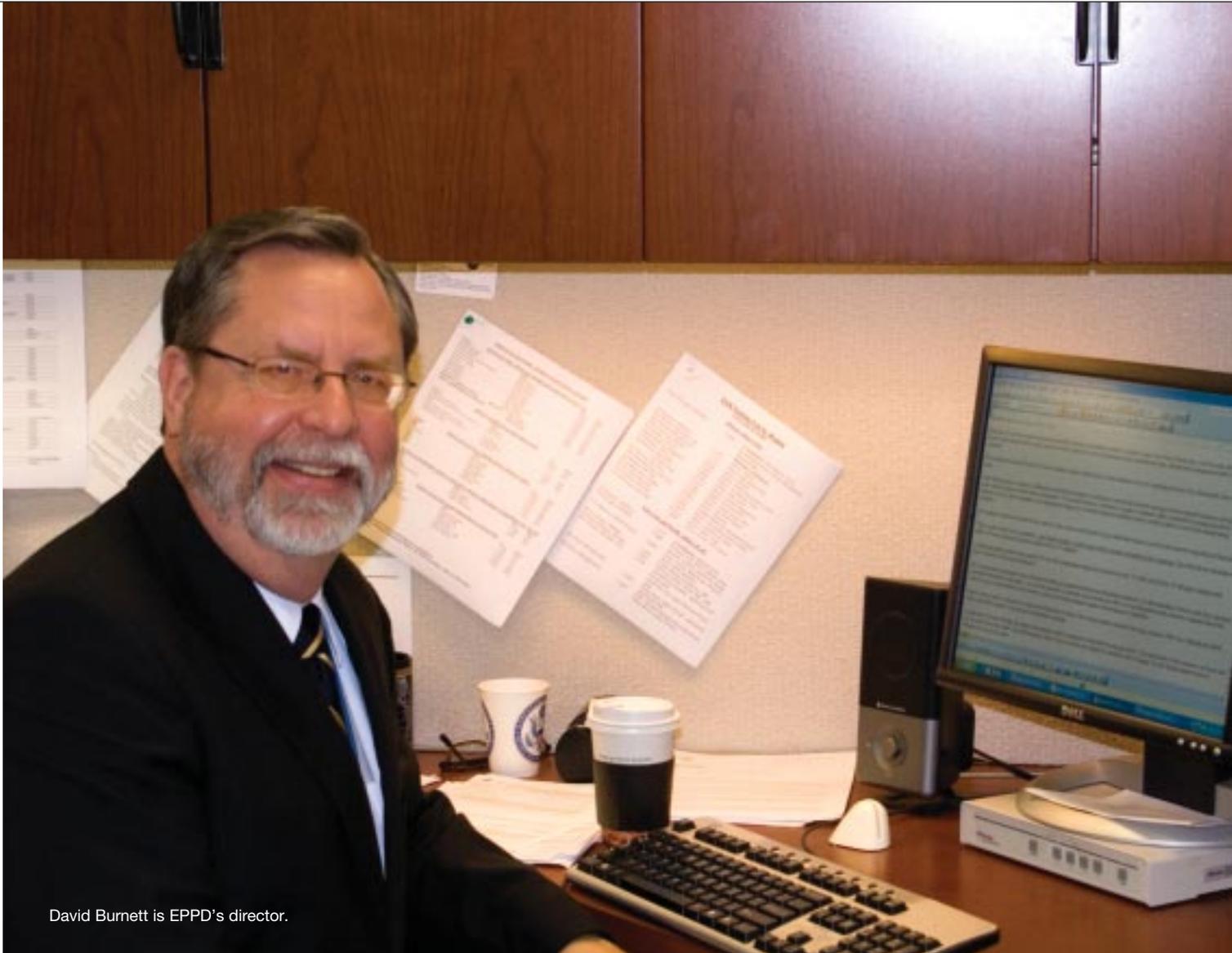
Staff size
16

Office location
HST Suite 3844

Web site
<http://state.gov/e/eeb>



EPPD Outreach Coordinator Tiffany Enoch, left, confers with Andrew Weinschenk, congressional adviser.



David Burnett is EPPD's director.

In 2007, EPPD began providing policy support for the U.S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which is expanding its membership—Chile, Estonia, Israel, Russia and Slovenia are candidates—and enhancing its engagement with emerging economies. EPPD has the lead in formulating U.S. policies that will play a vital role in how the world responds to the impact of the major rising economies.

A core constituency for EEB's message is Congress. Working with the Bureau of

Legislative Affairs, EPPD forges and maintains communication with Congress and helps advance EEB's Hill agenda by advocating for legislation, monitoring legislative developments, providing timely responses to requests for information and preparing bureau principals to provide testimony. Free trade was a recent focus of EPPD's congressional outreach, and EPPD has supported free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and the Republic of Korea. In 2007, it helped with the outreach for the successful Peru FTA.

Three Teams

EPPD's staff consists of 13 officers, two office management specialists and one part-time contractor. Office functions are divided among three teams. The policy analysis team analyzes current and long-term international economic policy challenges and develops policy initiatives for them. It also works with the Bureau of Intelligence and Research to organize interagency seminars on hot topics such as hedge fund regulation, long-term energy prospects and the economic outlook for Africa, and serves as the de facto "desk" for the U.S. Mission to the OECD. This makes it the ideal workplace for those with strong economic backgrounds and quantitative skills.

The team consists of two Foreign Service officers, three Civil Service officers and a part-time contractor; its Foreign Service

With such talented teams, EPPD Office Director David Burnett said he does his best to stay out of their way.

alumni have become office directors, deputy directors in regional bureaus and economic section chiefs at embassies.

The Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, or PD, team manages media relations for EBB's principals; supports media relations for the under secretary for economic, energy and agriculture; and works on strategic communications for economic policy initiatives. The team often takes policy analyses and turns them into media-friendly talking points for Department principals. It also works to incorporate media briefings and public outreach into trip planning for the Department's economic policy principals, produces talking points on economic policy and issues the daily economic news clips.

One PD team alumnus is now deputy director for multilateral trade policy and another runs the public affairs office at the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki, Finland.

The outreach team of three Civil Service officers keeps Congress apprised of economic policy initiatives and conducts liaison with business, labor and nongovernmental organizations. It also organizes the ACE award and manages U.S. involvement in the OECD-based Partnership for Democratic Governance, focusing donor assistance on building governance capacity in fragile or post-conflict states. The team spends most of its time networking with private sector or legislative contacts.

With such talented teams, EPPD Office Director David Burnett said he does his best to stay out of their way. Half in jest, he

said the interplay between the office's literati and its "numerati"—its numbers-literate staff—makes for intellectual ferment and zest. Recent EPPD directors now are economic section heads in Berlin and Tokyo or serve as deputy chiefs of mission at such posts as Canberra, Australia.

EPPD has many roles, but its most important role is as an in-house think tank, analyzing policy prescriptions for the U.S. economic and foreign policy agenda. EPPD serves the American people by promoting economic policies and programs that build America's prosperity. More information is available at <http://state.gov/e/eeb>. ■

The author is a public affairs adviser in EPPD.



EPPD Senior Outreach Coordinator Nancy Smith-Nissley discusses the ACE Awards brochure with EPPD Deputy Director for Public Diplomacy Viktor Sidabras. A 2007 Ace Award went to General Electric Indonesia for its post-tsunami relief efforts and its employee volunteerism and educational programs.



Patch Work

QUILTER'S ART WARMS WALTER REED PATIENTS **BY ED WARNER**

True to her Amish-country roots, Debra Shetler makes quilts—and makes them and makes them.

A senior academic exchange specialist in the office of Western Hemisphere Fulbright Programs, Shetler spends her spare time stitching at the quilting frame or prowling the aisles of fabric stores, hunting just the right material for a piece of work that, with a clever design, can be transformed from something to warm a chilly night into a work of art.

Take her fish quilt. In Wal-Mart, she found material printed

with images of sea creatures. Elsewhere, she found deep-blue fabric in a pattern that looked like waves. She snipped out the sea creatures, centered them in squares of tropical-colored fabric and surrounded the squares with the wavy “water”—presto, she had a present for a sea-creature-loving friend who had just remodeled her kitchen.

In February, Shetler and her Falls Church, Va., quilting club were busy making quilts that will also be given away, in this case to wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in



Corporal Shane Ugliono, left, receives a handmade quilt from Red Cross volunteer Connie Forster. He is being treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for wounds received in Iraq.

Shetler displays one of her handmade quilts in an office that is adorned with quilts.



Washington, D.C. Her club produces quilts for Quilts for Valor, a national organization with a mission to cover all wounded U.S. service members with handmade quilts. If the recovering soldier is especially patriotic, he or she might receive a quilt that has a red, white and blue theme. A sports fan's quilt might have blocks showing tennis racquets and golf clubs.

The "Soldier's Quilt" she did last year had the colors of a uniform—blue and gold with a red border. Another club member honored a fan of classic comedy with a black-and-white quilt featuring a picture of the Three Stooges.

Her group got involved because "We wanted to bring them comfort," she explained. Often, they add a personal note to the quilt's back, such as "You're our hero" or "Freedom isn't free." Always, they include the quilt's title and the names of its makers.

They then send the quilts to Quilts for Valor—they sent a dozen in 2007—and Red Cross volunteers at Walter Reed present them. Although Shetler has never been present for a quilt's presentation, she said she understands "there are quilts all over" the hospital's wards.

Although her office in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is filled with quilts hung like pictures, Shetler keeps few of her quilts, selling none and giving most to friends or charities. She made a Civil War quilt for her sister, for instance, keeping it

only long enough to win a viewer's choice award at a quilt show. A similar quilt in her office has an "Ohio star" pattern of diamond-shaped squares, which are surrounded by a hand-stitched vine in bloom.

The making of quilts for others comes from Shetler's childhood in Holmes County, Ohio—Amish country. There were often quilting bees at her Amish grandmother's house, she said—though never on Sundays—and grandmother always had a quilt in a frame when Shetler's family came to visit.

Unlike the Amish, however, Shetler often uses a sewing machine. Furthermore, she usually makes only the top portion of a quilt, relying on someone else to attach the middle and back layers and stitch the three pieces together, which makes the quilt puffy. After her club makes quilts for Quilts for Valor, for instance, a local woman does the quilting.

This is not to underplay the cost or complexity of her work: A quilt can contain 1,736 pieces, fabric costing as much as \$300 and require 300 hours of work, she said. Furthermore, she acknowledged that sometimes she doesn't know how the design she has in mind will turn out.

That could be a comment made by any artist. ■

The author is deputy editor of State Magazine.

With this article, *State Magazine* resumes a series of occasional stories on the unusual or extraordinary hobbies or interests engaged in by State Department employees after working hours. If you know of someone we should profile, e-mail Ed Warner at warneres@state.gov or call *State Magazine* at (202) 663-1700.

FRAGILE





BUYER BEWARE

VIGILANT CONSUMER ESSENTIAL TO PRODUCT SAFETY **BY KATE BRADFORD**

Product safety has been a hot topic in recent months. News reports have created concerns about lead in toys, product recalls and the safety of everything from baby cribs to portable generators. The global economy results in cheaper goods, but the pressure to reduce production costs can lead to the use of materials that increase the risk to safety and health.

Deaths, injuries and property damage from consumer product incidents cost us more than \$800 billion annually, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Part of the experience of living abroad is venturing out into local markets where consumer product safety laws may or may not exist. Can you be sure that the brandy decanter you bought does not contain lead? Does the toy that you found for your toddler have small parts that create a choking hazard? Is the local appliance you purchased likely to shock you because it has no electrical ground? These questions are meant to raise healthy concerns, not fear.

Many international and national agencies are dedicated to product safety. In the United States, the CPSC is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products. Internationally, the International Organization for Standardization has standards for consumer safety. The European Union and many countries also have consumer safety laws and regulations.

In addition to regulatory agencies, several nongovernmental organizations are dedicated to product safety. One of the most well known, the Consumer's Union, tests consumer products for a variety of factors, including safety. The International Consumer Product Safety and Health Organization meets annually to address health and safety concerns affecting consumers.

The ultimate responsibility, though, rests with the consumer. This may seem a daunting task, but a good starting point is to look at several key areas: toy safety, product recalls and electrical safety.

In 2005, the CPSC reported that 20 children under the age of 15 died in incidents associated with toys, and about 202,300 children under 15 were treated in emergency rooms for toy-related injuries. When contemplating a toy purchase, select toys that are age appropriate. Review the CPSC's Toy Safety Shopping Tips publication, heeding its advice to keep small toys, balls and loose toy parts away from children under age 3. Avoid toys with sharp or jagged edges, cords that can choke or heating elements that can cause burns. On

household art materials, look for the ASTM D-4236 designation, which means the product was reviewed by a toxicologist.

Avoid toys that contain small magnets. The CPSC reports that since 2005 several hundred children have ingested magnets, resulting in more than 85 injuries and one death. Magnets can attract each other in the body and twist or pinch the intestines, causing holes, blockages, infection and death. Most important, show your child how to play with a toy, and supervise small children especially closely.

Pay attention to product recalls. The CPSC issues more than 400 recalls annually for toys, clothing, children's jewelry, tools, appliances, electronics and electrical products. Recall listings can be found at www.cpsc.gov. You can sign up for free e-mail notifications at www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx. Food and drug recalls are listed at www.fda.gov. Send in registration cards included with products so you can be notified should the product be recalled later. If you suspect the item is faulty or dangerous, contact the retailer, manufacturer or CPSC.

Electrical appliances should have the electrical safety standards testing certification label for the country where they were purchased. In the United States, this is the Underwriters Laboratory UL rating. In EU countries, the CE rating is used. Additionally, ensure that appliances have a grounding wire and can effectively be grounded through their power source. Exercise caution with or avoid using appliances purchased in one part of the world when you are in other parts of the world. Remember that 110-volt appliances used in a 220-volt environment must be used with voltage converters. Often, the ground is lost during the conversion, increasing the risk of shock.

If you have questions regarding home electrical safety, ask a qualified electrician or safety professional. Don't take unnecessary risks.

Finally, ask questions. If you suspect that locally made products such as glassware contain lead or other hazardous materials, you must decide whether the purchase is worth the risk and how you plan to use the item. It may not be a souvenir worth keeping. Find out how the product is made and whether local consumer safety standards exist and are enforced.

Being an educated consumer is your best defense. ■

The author is a certified industrial hygienist with the Safety, Health and Environmental Management Division.

BY JOHN BENTEL

Series Closes 2007 With Holiday Music

The State of the Arts Cultural Series and the Foreign Affairs Recreation Association presented songs of the holiday season as 2007 came to a close.

A holiday trio consisting of vocalists Margaret Olson and Lawrence Patrick Reppert and pianist Patrick O'Donnell presented Baroque and traditional holiday music to resounding applause. Olson is coordinator of vocal studies at Morgan State University. Reppert performs with the Cathedral Choir at the Washington National Cathedral and has performed with many parish choirs in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. O'Donnell has performed widely in the Washington area.

The Lost Agency Ramblers presented a

program entitled "Christmas, Folk and Parodies"—songs of the season with a comical twist. The Ramblers are a loose confederation of part-time musicians and hobbyists from the bureaus of International Information Programs and Educational and Cultural Affairs. Each Friday at noon, they gather to play, learn and have fun making music. Their music runs the gamut from country and folk to blues and rock. Band members are Bob Holden, Rene Soudee, Peggy Hu, Chas Hausheer, John Connerley, Dorothy Mora, Bill Goodwin, Steve Kaufman, Robert Lashinsky and Mike Kuczynski. ■

The author is a computer specialist in the Executive Secretariat.

Margaret Olson and Lawrence Reppert sing at the December State of the Arts concert.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR



MARCH 26

Antonio Adams, Dramatic Tenor

APRIL 09

William Feasley, Classical Guitar

APRIL 23

Children's School of Moscow, Jazz Performed as part of the BIG BAND JAM

Performances are on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium.



U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic
P. Robert Fannin of Arizona, a lawyer and businessman, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic. He has practiced law since 1963, most recently with the international firm Steptoe & Johnson LLP. A proponent of responsible economic growth, he has served in various capacities with the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, and on numerous committees under several governors. He is also active in charitable and volunteer work. He served in the Air Force.



U.S. Ambassador to Portugal
Thomas F. Stephenson of California, a venture capitalist, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Portuguese Republic. Previously, he was a partner at Sequoia Capital, a venture capital firm where he focused on information technology and healthcare companies. Prior to that, he worked for Fidelity Management Co. He is a member of the Board of Overseers at Harvard University and served in a similar capacity with the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He has served on dozens of corporate boards. He is married and has four children.



Under Secretary for Management
Patrick Francis Kennedy of Illinois, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, is the new Under Secretary for Management. Previously, he was director of the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation. Before that, he was deputy director of National Intelligence for Management. He has also been U.S. representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform with the rank of ambassador and held senior positions in Baghdad and Cairo.



U.S. Ambassador to The Gambia
Barry Leon Wells of Ohio, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia. Previously, he was director of the Office of Civil Rights and the Department's first chief diversity officer. He served as deputy director of the Foreign Service Institute. Before joining the Department, he was a Peace Corps official in Belize and Jamaica. He was also an associate professor at Howard University's School of Social Work. He is married and has two daughters.

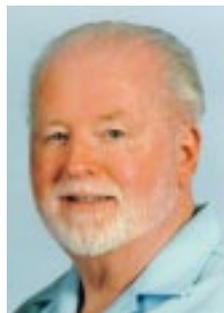


U.S. Ambassador to Chile
Paul E. Simons of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Chile. Previously, he was deputy assistant secretary for Energy, Sanctions and Commodities and, before that, acting assistant secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. He was involved in Arab-Israeli peace negotiations for several years. His overseas postings include Israel, Ecuador, Malawi and Colombia.



Suzanne "Susie" Brainne Carle, 75, widow of Foreign Service officer Bob Carle, mother of FSO Lisa Carle and mother-in-law of FSO Scott McGehee, died Dec. 27 of a massive internal hemorrhage in Coronado, Calif. A

French citizen, she met her husband in Paris and accompanied him on postings to Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Colombia, Bangladesh and Libya. They retired to Coronado in 1979. She volunteered at a vocational training school for young women in Tijuana, Mexico, and was an avid gardener.



Edward William "Ed" FitzGerald Jr., 73, a retired Foreign Service communicator, died Nov. 23 in Leesburg, Fla. He served in the Air Force before joining the Department in 1974. His overseas postings included Bonn, Islamabad, Brussels, São Paulo, Gaborone, London, Singapore and Canberra. He retired in 1998.

He retired in 1998.



Edward M. Featherstone, 72, a retired FSO, died Jan. 2 in Arlington, Va. He had Alzheimer's disease. He served in the Army before joining the Department in 1961. He spent 21 years in Japan during tours in Tokyo, Okinawa, Kobe-Osaka and Niigata. He also served overseas in Bridgetown. He retired in 1987, but was recalled to serve as the director of the Department's Japanese Language and Area Training Center in Yokohama for several years. He was an avid bicyclist and enjoyed hiking, scuba diving and sailing.

He retired in 1987, but was recalled to serve as the director of the Department's Japanese Language and Area Training Center in Yokohama for several years. He was an avid bicyclist and enjoyed hiking, scuba diving and sailing.



Howard Causey Holland, 93, a retired Civil Service employee, died Jan. 15. He lived in Durham, N.C. He served in the Navy during World War II. A pioneer in computer systems, he helped design and deploy computer installations for the Army and State Department after the war. He was a financial management officer with the Department for 29 years.

He was a financial management officer with the Department for 29 years.



Glenn W. Ferguson, 78, former U.S. ambassador to Kenya, died Dec. 20 of cancer in Santa Fe, N.M. He also served as associate director of the Peace Corps and first director of Volunteers in Service to America. He was president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and president and founder of Equity Africa, an innovator in small loans to rural businesses in Africa. He was president of Clark University, the University of Connecticut and the American University of Paris. He served in the Air Force during the Korean War.

He was president of Clark University, the University of Connecticut and the American University of Paris. He served in the Air Force during the Korean War.

Francis N. Magliozzi, 92, a retired FSO, died Oct. 20 of congestive heart failure in Springfield, Va. He served in the Army during World War II. After joining the Department in 1947, he served overseas in Germany, Denmark, Iraq, Belgium, French Equatorial Africa (where he helped introduce baseball to children), Somalia and Burundi. He retired in 1970. In addition to baseball, his interest included word origins, opera, country music, gardening and bridge.

In addition to baseball, his interest included word origins, opera, country music, gardening and bridge.



E. Jan Nadelman, 85, a retired FSO, died Nov. 24 of pneumonia in New York, N.Y. He served in Army intelligence during World War II. He joined the Department in 1946 and served overseas in Warsaw, Poznan, Rome, Palermo,

Frankfurt, West Berlin and Monrovia. He retired in 1972 to Riverdale, N.Y., where he restored his family home and managed the art estate of his father, sculptor Elie Nadelman.



Helena A. Osborn, 84, widow of retired FSO David L. Osborn, died Dec. 1 of lung cancer in San Diego, Calif. She worked for the Department in Paris, Warsaw and Tokyo, where she met her husband. She accompanied him on post-

ings to Taipei, Kobe, Sapporo, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Burma, where he was ambassador. They retired to San Diego, where she participated in Asian arts and cultural organizations. She was an avid painter and golfer and enjoyed cooking, music and mahjong.



Don Paarlberg Jr., 63, a retired FSO, died Oct. 15 due to complications from cancer in Washington, D.C. He served in the Peace Corps in Nepal before joining the Department in 1974. He served overseas in South Korea, Micronesia, Hong

Kong and Panama. He retired in 2003. He loved classical philosophy and wrote extensively on the works of Plato.

retirements

CIVIL SERVICE >>>

Brooks, Janet M.
 Coles, Alice C.
 Drummond, Willie E.
 Huff, Rodney L.
 Kelman, James Ward
 Kokal, Pamela
 Kurtz, Peter
 Marshall, Barbara Ann
 Miller, Cynthia B.
 Myers, Sylvia L.
 Ray, James Edward
 Smith, David G.

FOREIGN SERVICE >>>

Ball, David H.
 Boyce Jr., Ralph L.
 Brock-Evers, Leslie E.
 Brown, Stephanie L.
 Buentello, David
 Coward III, Sam B.
 Downer, William D.
 Furtado, Gilbert O.
 Gieseke, John M.
 Kniazuk, Diana B.
 Krzeminski, Joachim Z.
 McKeever, Thomas E.
 Murray, Joyce L.
 O'Neill, Kevin T.
 Puzio, Alan G.
 Rivers, Harry M.
 Semere, Linda M.
 Stottlemeyer, Jeffrey J.
 Tereyla, Mark Edmond
 Trickel, Janice L.
 Williams, Charles E.
 Zaitchick, Howard W.

Afghanistan's Blue Haven

Sitting high in the Hindu Kush mountain range, Afghanistan's Band-i-Amir lakes reflect a calm beauty in a country still torn in places by violence and political upheaval. Afghans looking for serenity and peace flock to the deep intensely blue lakes framed by sheer red sandstone bluffs. The 1973 Afghan government designated the region the country's first national park, but that declaration was never officially ratified. The lakes remain unprotected.

Colleagues from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul have teamed with the Provincial Reconstruction Team based in Bamyam province to help the national government establish the Band-i-Amir lakes as the country's first natural protected area. The idea is to preserve the unique environment surrounding the lakes while encouraging more tourism to help the struggling local economy.

By definition, Virtual Presence Posts are designed to compensate for personnel shortages by the judicious and effective use of strategic travel, improved interagency collaboration, digital video conferences, Web chats and dedicated Web sites. The Department currently operates 43 such posts, with plans for 30 more. But people still outweigh technology in the art

of diplomacy, and Locally Employed staff members play vital roles in the success of all virtual posts. One Foreign Service officer calls LE staff members the driving force behind virtual diplomacy.



When Ambassador Michael Wood arrived at post in Stockholm, he found his staff doing fine in its regular duties of engaging the Swedish government and public to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives. However, he wanted something more. He challenged his staff to find a

signature issue, a single big objective that could define the mission's work. Inspired by the challenge, the staff came up with a suitable One Big Thing—finding a breakthrough in alternative energy technology.

While a one-item list may sound simple, this idea was anything but. The ambitious first-year One Big Thing plan contained 28 goals; so far, post has met or partially met 23 of those. And the embassy practices what it preaches—all of its electricity now comes from renewable sources, 95 percent from hydropower and the rest from wind, solar and biomass. This One Big Thing also generates goodwill and political capital with the Swedish government and its people.

Last but not least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: *Suzanne "Susie" Brainne Carle; Edward M. Featherstone; Glenn W. Ferguson; Edward William "Ed" FitzGerald Jr.; Howard Causey Holland; Francis N. Magliozzi; E. Jan Nadelman; Helena A. Osborn; and Don Paarberg Jr.*

Rob Wiley

Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

COMING IN APRIL

- >>> State on the Web
- >>> Celebrating the Great Seal
- >>> Holding War Criminals Accountable
- >>> Foreign Service Promotion Statistics
- ... and much more!



Questions? Comments?
statemagazine@state.gov

LYING IN STATE: THE COUNSELING SESSION

GURLACK, YOU'RE A FINE
YOUNG OFFICER, BUT
WE NEED TO DISCUSS
YOUR INTERPERSONAL
SKILLS.

YOU MEAN
INTERACTIONS WITH
OTHER CARBON-BASED
ORGANISMS?



SOME OF YOUR
COLLEAGUES HAVE
COMPLAINED
YOU'RE A
KNOWITALL...

BUT I DO
KNOW IT ALL -
GO AHEAD AND
ASK ME!



TREATY OF ZADAR, SIGNED 1358!
U.S. PRESIDENT WITH THE BIGGEST FEET:
WARREN G. HARDING! THE UTAH STATE BIRD
IS THE CALIFORNIA GULL! THE AVERAGE
SPIDER MONKEY WEIGHS

FOURTEEN POUNDS!

THE MAXIMUM
POSSIBLE SCORE
IN MS. PAC-MAN
IS 3,333,360!



MAYBE IF YOU JUST
STOPPED TALKING
SOMETIMES AND
LISTENED...

IF I DO THAT, HOW
WILL I BE ABLE TO
SHARE MY DEEP
UNDERSTANDING
OF ICE DANCING?



AVERAGE TIME SOMEONE
CAN TALK CONTINUOUSLY
BEFORE PEOPLE
STOP
PAYING
ATTENTION?

TWO MINUTES, THIRTEEN-
WAIT, ARE YOU TRYING
TO MAKE A POINT
HERE?



AGUELEK 2008



MAR.2008



Foreign Affairs Day



U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Human Resources
Washington, DC 20520

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use

PERIODICALS
POSTAGE AND FEES
PAID
DEPARTMENT
OF STATE
ISSN 1099-4165

If address is incorrect, please indicate change. Do not cover or destroy this address label.
POSTMASTER: Send changes of address to:

State Magazine
HR/ER/SMG
SA-1, Room H-236
Washington, DC 20522-0108